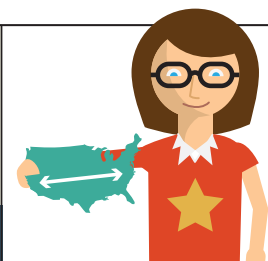


TEACHER PAY AND CAREER PATHS IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

A PRACTICAL POLICY GUIDE—SUMMARY

BY PUBLIC IMPACT



To help all students reach their potential, district leaders must ensure that every student has consistent access to excellent teaching. Opportunity Culture compensation and career path structures help make that possible. The full policy guide to *Teacher Pay and Career Paths in an Opportunity Culture* shows how districts can design teacher career paths that will keep excellent teachers in the classroom and extend their reach to more students, for more pay, within budget. When districts design these paths, they create opportunities for *excellent* teachers to reach more students directly and by leading teaching teams, for *solid* teachers to contribute to excellence immediately, and for *all* teachers to receive the support and development they deserve.

In this summary of that guide, we include the graphics that show how pay and career paths work at a glance. Refer to the [detailed guide](#) for the organizing steps and details a district needs to design pay and career paths that fit its needs and values; for pay calculation details, see the [guide](#) and the “Pay Teachers More” page of [OpportunityCulture.org](#).

Why do students need consistent, excellent teaching?

Research confirms that without excellent teaching consistently, students who start behind stay behind. Even hardworking, solid teachers who achieve one year of learning progress each year leave achievement gaps intact. By providing all students with excellent teachers—those in today’s top 20 to 25 percent who achieve well over one year of learning progress—schools can close gaps fast. But with traditional staffing plans, most schools can provide students with excellent teachers in only one out of four classrooms.

How can all students have access to excellent teaching?

- * **Recruit.** Nations now surging ahead in education have limited who can teach to top high school or college students who also exhibit other qualities needed for great teaching. U.S. school districts should follow their lead. But this alone would be inadequate in the U.S. economy, where higher-paid careers attract top candidates, too.
- * **Retain.** Top-performing professionals want rapid on-the-job development that leads to paid career advancement opportunities; districts and states must provide these to make teaching an attractive, long-term career option (see Figure 1).
- * **Extend.** Most teachers today work alone. Excellent teachers rarely have authority, time, or sustained incentives to lead while teaching. Solid teachers are on their own, with few chances to learn on the job from excellent peers. To ensure that every student has access to excellent teaching consistently, districts must help excellent teachers extend their reach to far more students, directly and by leading teaching teams. “Reach extension” also creates new roles and in-school time for all teachers to learn on the job from the best, contribute to excellence immediately, and pursue sustainably paid career advancement.

In short, district leaders must establish an “Opportunity Culture” for students *and* teachers.

How can district leaders make this a reality?

- * **First**, district leaders must commit to reaching every student with excellent teaching consistently. Districts implementing Opportunity Culture models commit to five Opportunity Culture Principles that support this goal (see page 2).
- * **Second**, leaders must change how teaching roles are organized, by engaging teachers and principals to craft school models that reach all students with excellent teaching. OpportunityCulture.org provides materials to help.
- * **Third**, districts must align pay and other systems to support teaching excellence and learning. The full guide and this summary help districts design **career paths and pay** that reflect community values, as well as the core goals of an Opportunity Culture—excellent instruction for all students and excellent career opportunities for all teachers.

Early schools and districts implementing an Opportunity Culture have been ambitious. All districts are aiming to:

- **reach at least 80 percent of students with truly excellent teachers** who are formally accountable for their learning,
- **pay supplements of 10 to 50 percent** to highly effective teachers from the start,
- **fund pay supplements within regular budgets**,
- **add time for teacher planning and collaboration**, and
- **adapt evaluation and accountability systems** to reflect the responsibilities of new roles.

Opportunity Culture Principles make a range of sustainable, high-impact career path options possible, with more or fewer levels of advancement, and with higher or lower pay supplements available to each role.

Typical “career advancement” possibilities push teachers out of the classroom into administration, or into roles that rarely offer real authority, accountability for student outcomes, or permanent and substantial pay bumps. In contrast, an Opportunity Culture that follows the Opportunity Culture Principles provides many significant opportunities for teachers. Figure 1 shows the possibilities when districts and schools design career paths and compensation structures to support an Opportunity Culture, in which all teachers have career opportunities that build their professional competence and maximize their positive impact on student learning. As they advance in an Opportunity Culture, teachers reach more students, for more pay — much more: **The first sites have paid supplements of up to 50 percent of average salaries, within regular budgets, even before implementing the highest-level teacher-leader roles.** Teachers have many advancement options, but nearly all advanced roles keep excellent teachers teaching — taking advantage of their instructional mastery while developing their teamwork, organizing, and leadership skills, and enabling all teachers to learn on the job.

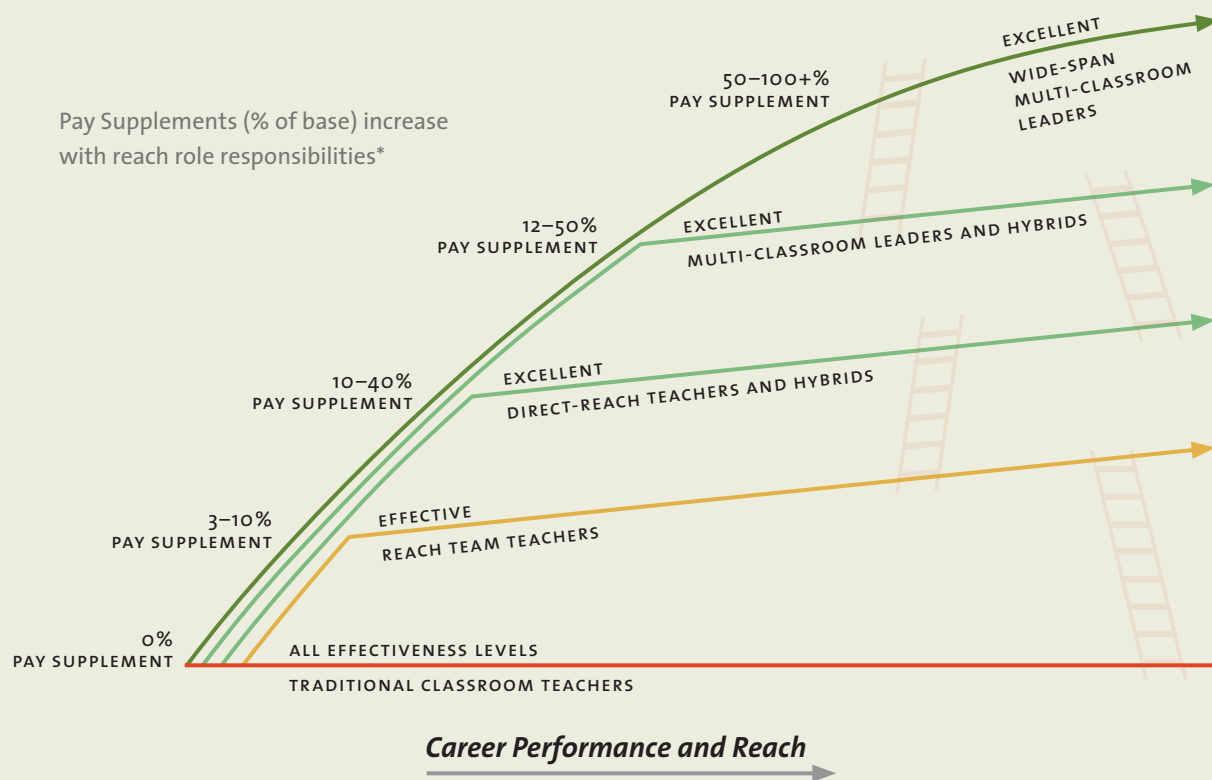
OPPORTUNITY CULTURE PRINCIPLES

Teams of teachers and school leaders must choose and tailor models to:

1. Reach more students with excellent teachers and their teams
2. Pay teachers more for extending their reach
3. Fund pay within regular budgets
4. Provide protected in-school time and clarity about how to use it for planning, collaboration, and development.
5. Match authority and accountability to each person’s responsibilities

FIGURE 1.

Opportunity Culture: Whole Careers’ Worth of Learning, Advancement, and Pay Opportunity



*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of average pay.

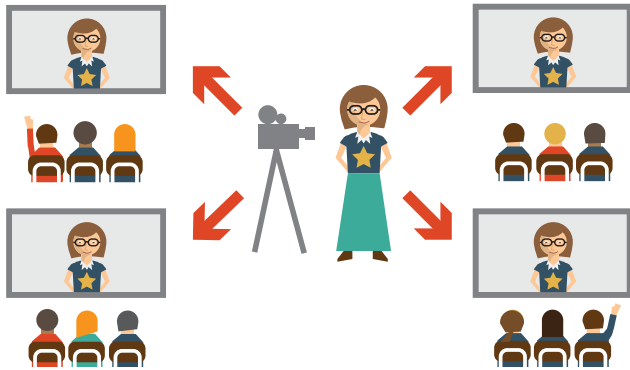
FIGURE 2. School Model Snapshots

The core models and roles of an Opportunity Culture provide the foundation for building career and pay structures. Schools still have significant latitude for determining how each model and role operates within each school. Teachers themselves have significant autonomy to make the roles work well.



MULTI-CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP

Teachers with leadership skills both teach and lead teams or “pods” of other teachers in order to share strategies and best practices for classroom success. Responsible for achieving high growth for all classrooms in the pod, the teacher-leader determines how students spend time and tailors teachers’ roles according to their strengths.



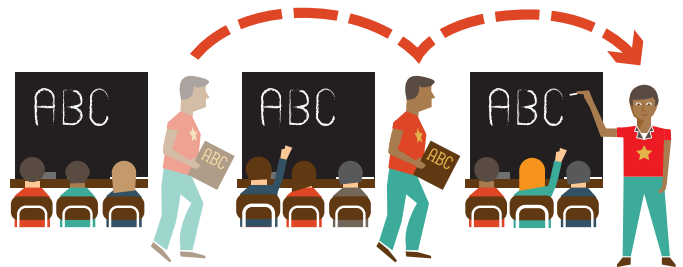
REMOTE TEACHING

Schools without enough excellent teachers can enlist accountable remote teachers down the street or across the nation. Remote teachers use technology to provide live, but not in-person, instruction, while on-site teammates manage administrative duties and develop the whole child.



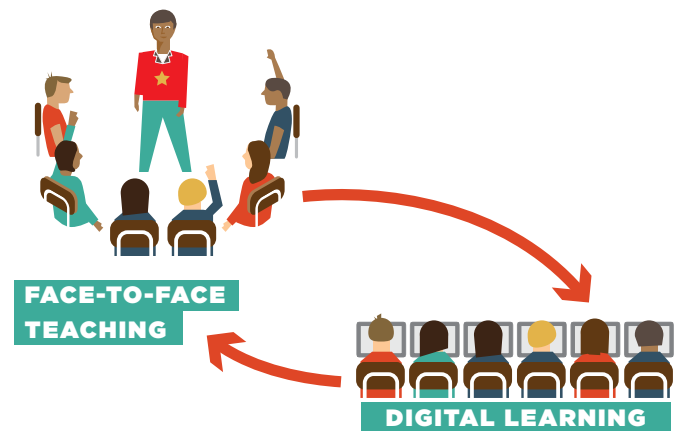
CLASS-SIZE INCREASES

Excellent teachers teach larger classes, by choice and within limits, in some cases shifting students from other teachers’ classrooms.



ELEMENTARY SPECIALIZATION

A school’s best teachers teach only their best subject(s)—such as math/science or language arts/social studies—while teammates take care of students the rest of the time and cover administrative work. This allows specialized teachers to instruct multiple classrooms of students and gain more time for planning and collaboration.



TIME-TECHNOLOGY SWAPS

Students spend part of the day engaged in self-paced digital learning. Digital instruction replaces enough of top teachers’ time that they can teach more students, using face-to-face teaching time for higher-order learning and personalized follow-up. Teachers can use part of their freed time for planning and collaboration. A related model calls for a **Time Swap** without technology, replacing digital instruction time with time for offline skills practice and projects.

This graphic shows how teaching roles in an Opportunity Culture relate to school models and career paths, with examples of career paths for the roles on the following pages.

FIGURE 3. Summary of Teacher Career Paths and Roles in Opportunity Culture School Models

Path	Direct-Reach Teacher			Multi-Classroom Leader	Support Teacher	District- Funded Teacher-Leader
Roles	Elementary Specialized Teacher	Blended-Learning Teacher Expanded- Impact Teacher (low-tech)	Large-Class Teacher	Multi-Classroom Leader	Team Teacher Professional Tutor	Design Specialist* Leadership Coach (of Multi-Classroom Leaders) Video Teacher Digital Designer
How is reach extended?	Teaching best subject to more classes, while reducing other duties	Swapping portion of time with paraprofessional-supervised skills practice and projects— digital or offline—to teach more students	Increasing class sizes, within limits and by choice	Leading multiple classrooms' worth of students with a teaching team for whom leader is responsible	Supporting multi-classroom leader or efficient team, and/ or addressing subject or teaching role(s) delegated by team leader	Producing materials that reach students across schools in the district, or coaching multi-classroom leaders across schools
School Model	Subject Specialization (Elementary)	Time-Tech Swap Time-Time Swap	Class-Size Changes	Multi-Classroom Leadership		All School Models

*Curriculum and assessment designers are common examples.

FIGURE 4. Teacher Career Paths and Roles in Opportunity Culture Models, with Pay and Funding Source*

Direct-Reach Teacher	Multi-Classroom Leader	Support Teacher and Non-Reach	District-Funded Teacher-Leader
Elementary Specialized Teacher Blended-Learning Teacher Expanded-Impact Teacher Large-Class Teacher	Multi-Classroom Leader	Team Teacher Professional Tutor Traditional Classroom Teacher	Full-Time or Hybrid: Video Teacher Digital Designer Design Specialist— Curriculum & Assessment
Pay Supplement: 10–40% for Highly Effective 3–6%+ for Effective	Pay Supplement: 20–100%+	Pay Supplement: Depends on how savings distributed	Pay Supplement: Depends on current district spending
\$ Source: School Reallocation	\$ Source: School Reallocation	\$ Source: School Reallocation	\$ Source: District Reallocation

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average** pay. Factors affecting supplements include current spending levels in schools, the number of roles to which spending is reallocated in a given school, and state policies allowing position swaps with full funding.

FIGURE 5. Example of a Direct-Reach Teacher Career Path

This example shows a progression for teachers on a direct-reach career path—which may cover elementary specialists, blended-learning teachers, expanded-impact teachers, and large-class teachers. Some districts may restrict pay supplements to *highly effective* teachers. Others may include effective teachers. Districts that include effective teachers will need to determine how the responsibilities and pay differ for effective and highly effective teachers who extend reach directly. Pay levels and supplements are examples; supplements are expressed as a percent of average pay.

Level	Minimum Experience	Performance	Pay Supplement*
Master Reach Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends reach on efficient team to help more students.• Mastery of instructional planning and differentiation effective with a wide variety of students.• Mentors and leads peer informally.	5 years (3 as Direct-Reach Teacher)	Excellent/Highly Effective in 2 of 3 years as Direct-Reach Teacher	22%
Senior Reach Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends reach on efficient team to help more students.• Mastery of instructional planning and differentiation.• Mentors and leads peers informally.	3 years	Excellent/Highly Effective in 2 of 3 previous years	10%
Advanced Reach Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends reach on efficient team to help more students.• Uses advanced instructional planning and delivery skills.	3 years	Effective in most recent 2 years	6%
Reach Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends reach on efficient team to help more students.• Works with teammates to plan and implement instruction.	0 years	N/A	3%
<i>*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of average pay.</i>			

Multiple levels give Direct-Reach Teachers incentives to improve and advance

Experience thresholds keep teachers engaged through the 4-year “itch”

Advancement to top levels that are restricted to excellent teachers creates substantial incentives for best to extend reach

Significant supplements at top help teaching compete with other professions

FIGURE 6. Example of a Multi-Classroom Leader Career Path

Pay levels and supplements are examples; supplements are expressed as a percent of average pay.

Level	Minimum Experience	Performance	Pay Supplement*
MCL IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches and leads efficient, highly effective reach team of 12+ teachers and their students. May be responsible for whole school in a subject or three or more grade levels. 	8 years (4 as MCL)	Excellent/Highly Effective in 3 of 4 previous years	70%
MCL III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches and leads efficient, highly effective reach team of 8–11 teachers and their students. 	5 years (2 as MCL)	Excellent/Highly Effective in 3 of 4 previous years	55%
MCL II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches and leads efficient, highly effective reach team of 4–7 teachers and their students. 	4 years	Excellent/Highly Effective in 3 of 4 previous years	40%
MCL I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches and leads efficient, highly effective reach team of 2–3 teachers and their students. Role may be embedded in larger reach team. 	3 years	Excellent/Highly Effective in 2 of 3 previous years	10–22% (or par with top direct-reach roles)
*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of <i>average</i> pay.			

Multiple levels give MCLs options to expand leadership responsibilities and extend reach

Thresholds provide continued growth opportunities over the course of a career. For example, the earliest an MCL I could become an MCL II is scheduled to coincide with multiple years of great teaching and then a broadening into informal leadership and mentoring in the schools

High bars attract top performers and keep principals from promoting too soon, before teachers understand what makes them highly effective and have a base of experience teaming with and influencing other adults

Substantial supplements keep excellent teachers in these roles longer and cement commitment to the profession

FIGURE 7. Example of a Support Teacher Career Path

This example shows a progression for support teachers, who typically work as part of a team. Some districts may pay a supplement to these teachers for their roles in extending the team's reach, while others may limit supplements to teachers playing full teaching roles as direct-reach teachers (see Figure 5). Districts also may use the Support Teacher path for effective teachers who extend reach directly and are working toward highly effective status, instead of having lower levels on the Direct-Reach path. Pay levels and supplements are examples; supplements are expressed as a percent of average pay.

Level	Minimum Experience	Performance	Pay Supplement*
Team Teacher II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps team extend reach to help more students. Contributes to instructional planning or other tasks that enable team to extend reach and achieve excellent outcomes, as determined by team leader. Uses advanced instructional planning and delivery skills. May be a "direct-reach" teacher working toward highly-effective status. 	3 years (3 as Team Teacher I)	Proficient/Effective or above in 3 years as Team Teacher I	6%
Team Teacher I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps team extend reach to help more students. Plays focused instructional role, as determined by team leader. May be a "direct-reach" teacher working toward highly-effective status. 	0	Proficient/Effective or above in two most recent years	0–3%
Professional Tutor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides individual or small-group instruction in support of an extended-reach team. May advance by providing more instructional planning to team. 	0	Proficient/Effective or above in two most recent years	0–3%

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average** pay.

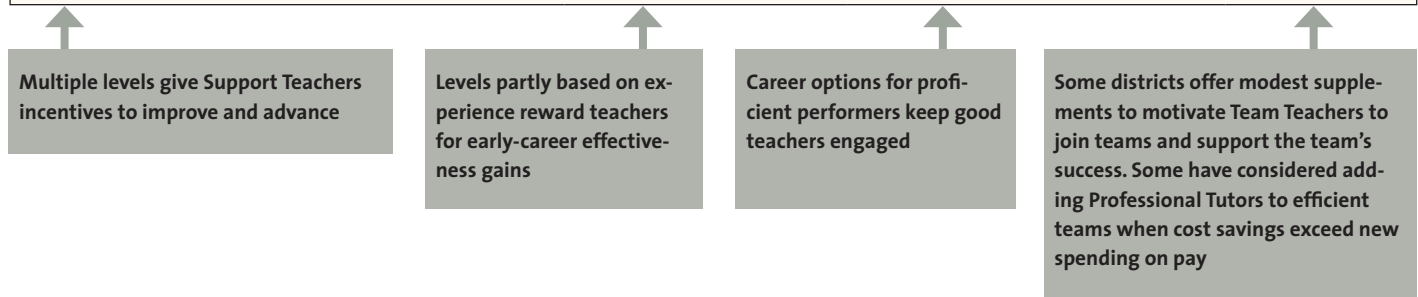


FIGURE 8. Example of a Paraprofessional Career Path

Level	Minimum Experience	Performance	Pay Supplement*
Master Reach Associate —Operates more independently and performs more organizing and supervisory tasks, enabling teachers to reach more students with excellent outcomes.	5 years (2 as Reach Associate)	Excellent/Highly Effective in 2 of 3 previous years	15%
Reach Associate —Supports teacher or team to extend their reach by supervising students' skills practice and project time, developing students' social, emotional, and organizational skills, and completing administrative paperwork.	0 years	Proficient/Effective consistently	3%
Teaching Assistant —Assists teacher as directed	0 years	Proficient/Effective	0% extra
*Pay levels and supplements are examples; supplements are expressed as a percent of average pay. Because paraprofessional pay is far lower, and these roles are less numerous, these percentages can be higher than for team teachers or aligned with those percentages.			

Multiple levels give paraprofessionals incentives to improve and advance

Levels that are partly based on experience reward paraprofessionals for early-career effectiveness gains

Career options for proficient performers keep good paraprofessionals contributing to the team

Supplements motivate paraprofessionals to join teams and support the team's success

FIGURE 9. Example of District-Funded Teacher-Leader Career Paths

Position	Pay Supplement*
District-Funded Teacher-Leader Role: Design Specialist Video Teacher Leadership Coach Digital Designer	Hybrid Leader IV Up to 75%
	Hybrid Leader III Up to 65%
	Hybrid Leader II Up to 50%
	Hybrid Leader I Up to 22%
	Senior Hybrid 5–10%
Optional Step: Direct-Reach Teacher or Multi-Classroom Leader	10–43% 20–more than 100%
Classroom Teacher	0%

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average** pay.

FIGURE 10. Complete Educational Leadership Path with Multi-School Leadership

Multi-school leaders manage multiple schools with a team of principals and assistant principals for whom they are responsible. Multi-classroom leadership provides a new pathway for developing the leadership competencies and management skills of teachers before assuming schoolwide leadership roles, potentially increasing the quality and quantity of schoolwide leaders. Multi-school leadership similarly allows outstanding principals to develop their leadership skills and help other schoolwide leaders learn on the job—while retaining responsibility for student success. Role and pay detail for levels 5–11 on this progression will be addressed in future publications.

Level	Role
11	Superintendent
10	Assistant Superintendent
9	Multi-School Leader 4
8	Multi-School Leader 3
7	Multi-School Leader 2
6	Principal
5	Assistant Principal
4	Multi-Classroom Leader 4
3	Multi-Classroom Leader 3
2	Multi-Classroom Leader 2
1	Classroom Teacher or Direct-Reach Teacher
0	Pre-Service Teachers

Districts must determine how many levels of differentiated responsibility and pay they will offer on each career path.

- * In a **very flat** structure, all teachers extending their reach receive the same supplement. “Career paths” would not really be paths, but a set of single-level roles.
- * In a **modestly differentiated** structure, the more challenging role of multi-classroom leader might earn more than direct-reach roles, and different spans of leadership may be recognized.
- * In a **more differentiated structure**, different roles, leadership spans, and levels for effective and highly effective teachers are recognized, with the responsibility for informal mentoring and the most complex differentiation and instructional planning pushed to the most effective team members, for higher pay.
- * The **most highly differentiated** career structures include levels for different reach roles, leadership spans, effectiveness levels, *and* years of experience that demonstrate commitment to working in Opportunity Culture models—offering the potential to reach the most staff members with a supplemental pay opportunity.

FIGURE 11. Flat Career Structure

Role	Example Pay Supplement*
All Extended-Reach Teachers <i>Direct-Reach Teachers and Multi-Classroom Leaders</i>	25% of average pay
Classroom Teacher	0%

*Pay supplements are examples and are a percent of **average** pay.

FIGURE 12. Modestly Differentiated Structure

Role	Example Pay Supplement*
Multi-Classroom Leader	40% of average pay
Direct-Reach Teacher**	20%
Classroom Teacher	0%

*Pay supplements are examples and are a percent of **average** pay.

FIGURE 13. More Differentiated Structure

Role	Example Pay Supplement*
Multi-Classroom Leader II	50% of average pay
Multi-Classroom Leader I	30%
Direct-Reach Teacher — Highly Effective, Mentor**	20%
Direct-Reach Teacher — Effective, Team Teacher	5%
Classroom Teacher	0%

*Pay supplements are examples and are a percent of **average** pay.

FIGURE 14. Highly Differentiated Structure

Role		Example Pay Supplement*
Multi-Classroom Leader IV: Leads 11+ teachers’ worth of classes with team		75% of average pay
Multi-Classroom Leader III: Leads 8–10 teachers’ worth of classes with team		65%
Multi-Classroom Leader II: Leads 4–7 teachers’ worth of classes with team		50%
Multi-Classroom Leader I: Leads 2–3 teachers’ worth of classes with team		22%
Master Reach Teacher — Highly Effective, Mentor, 3+ years on reach team**		22%
Senior Reach Teacher — Highly Effective, Mentor, up to 3 years on reach team**		10%
Team Teacher II — Effective, Team Teacher, 3+ years on reach team	Advanced Reach Teacher — Effective, 3+ years on reach team	6%
Team Teacher I — Effective, Team Teacher, up to 3 years on reach team	Reach Teacher — Effective, up to 3 years on reach team	3%
Paraprofessional		3%
Classroom Teacher		0%

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average** pay.

**Includes blended-learning, expanded-impact, and specialized elementary teachers.

Teachers in an Opportunity Culture have a wide range of well-paid options for moving sideways and up to advance their careers without leaving the classroom, while reaching more students with excellence.

FIGURE 15. Example: Teacher “Career Lattice”

Teachers can move up or across these levels as they qualify for advancement or progression to a different path. Pay percentages are examples, as are the number of levels of progression within each path.

PATHS						
	Support Teacher Path		Direct-Reach Teacher Path		Multi-Classroom Leader Path	
					Multi-Classroom Leader IV	75%
					Multi-Classroom Leader III	65%
					Multi-Classroom Leader II	50%
					Multi-Classroom Leader I	22%
			Master Reach Teacher	22%	Hybrid Leader IV	
			Senior Reach Teacher	10%	Hybrid Leader III	
			Advanced Reach Teacher	6%	Hybrid Leader II	
	Team Teacher II	6%	Reach Teacher	3%	Hybrid Leader I	
	Team Teacher I	3%			Senior Hybrid I	
	Effective Teachers		Upper 2 Levels: Highly Effective Teachers Lower 2 Levels: Effective Teachers		Highly Effective Teachers	

*Pay supplement figures are examples only and are expressed as a percent of **average** pay.

When schools and districts create these new career paths and pay structures, they create the key elements of the Opportunity Culture virtuous cycle, because sustainably higher pay and advancement opportunities attract more great candidates to the teaching profession, help to retain top performers, and enable schools to be more selective in hiring.

FIGURE 16. Opportunity Culture Virtuous Cycle



Acknowledgements

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